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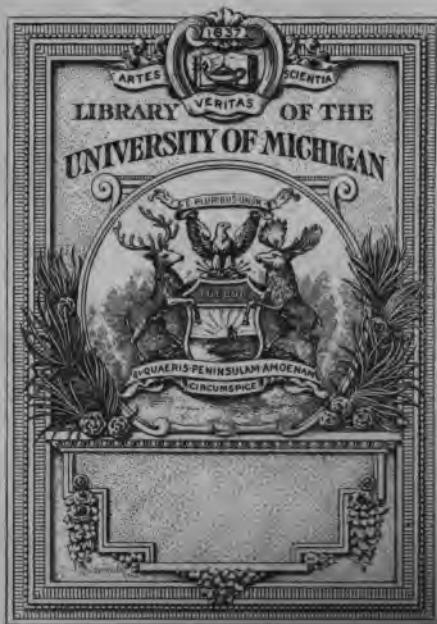
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S P E E C H E S

OF

SIR GEORGE STAUNTON,

114/17

ADDRESSED TO THE

ELECTORS OF SOUTH HAMPSHIRE,

AT PORTSEA, FAREHAM, AND SOUTHAMPTON,

IN DECEMBER, 1834, AND JANUARY, 1835.

London:

EDMUND LLOYD, HARLEY STREET;

AND

SIMPKIN AND MARSHALL,

STATIONERS' COURT.

1835.

PRINTED BY A. J. VALPY,
RED LION COURT, FLEET STREET.

TO THE
REVEREND JAMES HENVILLE,
&c. &c. &c.

MY DEAR SIR,

My object in reprinting the Speeches which I made during the late contest, is to place upon something like a permanent record, the grounds and principles upon which I then solicited, and should again solicit, were circumstances to invite me to do so, a renewal of the confidence of the Electors.

If I had anticipated my present intention, while these Speeches were fresh in my memory, I might perhaps have given absolutely accurate reports of them ; but I can do no more at present than reprint the best reports I can find among the newspapers of the day,

correcting only obvious errors and omissions, and decided mistakes of my meaning.

I have great pleasure in inscribing these Speeches to that valued friend, to whose primary invitation and encouragement it is chiefly owing that I ever occupied the position which called them forth—a position which, notwithstanding the unfortunate issue of the late contest, was attended with many circumstances highly honourable to myself, and gratifying to my feelings; and to which, therefore, I shall always look back with grateful recollection.

I am, my dear Sir,

With sincere regard and esteem,

Most truly yours,

GEORGE THOMAS STAUNTON.

Devonshire Street,

January 31st, 1835.

S P E E C H
OF
S I R G E O R G E S T A U N T O N ,
DELIVERED
AT A MEETING OF THE ELECTORS
OF SOUTH HANTS ,

Which took place at Portsea, on the 4th of December, 1834.

(Corrected from the Report in the Hampshire Telegraph.)

GENTLEMEN,—In rising to follow my right honourable colleague, for the purpose of showing you in what manner I have endeavoured faithfully, honestly, and independently, to discharge the duty imposed upon me, when placed in the proud station I have now filled, and the grounds on which I would solicit a renewal of your favour in the event of a dissolution, so generally expected—I feel I am not called upon to expatiate in that ample field which occupied your attention by the eloquence of my noble colleague. It is fortunate that I have not the necessity to do so, for I feel unable to do it justice; and, as far as my vindication is connected with that of the late Ministry, I may be content to leave it in the hands of my noble friend, who has done it with so much ability and effect. My task is plain, but very important,—

A

namely, to explain, and, if necessary, to vindicate the line of policy I have pursued as a member of parliament. I gave a general support, it is true, to His Majesty's late Government, because it was a *Reforming* Government; because it came into office upon the pledge of carrying into effect the principles of the Reform Bill. But that support was not an indiscriminate or unqualified support. Upon some occasions I considered it my duty to oppose the Government. I do not argue *now* whether I was right or wrong in so doing; I merely notice it to show that my support to His Majesty's late Government was a perfectly free and independent course of conduct.

Gentlemen, before I enter into the few observations I intend to address to you, I think it necessary to clear away the effects of a little placard that has appeared, and in which my opponents have done me an honour I hardly expected. It is rather singular that a document of this nature should come out of the enemies' camp: for I hold it an indelible record, founded on the admission of my opponents, of right principles having governed my conduct; first, my attachment to the Church to which I belong, and determination to maintain her just rights in full efficiency; secondly, and secondly only to the former, my devoted attachment to the principles of civil and religious liberty. These two principles are so far from being inconsistent, that I can hardly

suppose a true friend to the one not feeling the other. I feel proud of the record here given of my having been chosen to fill the highly distinguished station of president of the Church Society at Portsmouth, in which some of my most active opponents are vice-presidents. It is an answer to all the charges brought against me of a wish to pull down the Church. At the same time I feel every disposition to remove the difficulties that press upon that valuable class of the community, the Dissenters. I am charged with having supported the motion for the admission of Dissenters into the universities. I certainly supported that motion on the second reading. Degrees are a test of merit, in legal, scientific, or medical knowledge. I consider it a great injustice to Dissenters to deprive them of the opportunity of taking this test for their advantage. But if that Bill had proceeded, I might have differed as to its details, and should have taken care that the grant should have been given in such a way as not to interfere with the rights and privileges of the Church. It is said that I injured the Church by consenting to Lord Althorp's motion for the extinction of church-rates. But, so far from it being a motion for depriving the Church of the support of church-rates, it was allowed by most men to be their preservation, under another form, and I believe that by most moderate and reasonable men it was considered a very satisfactory and beneficial compromise.—

Gentlemen, I have nothing more to say in vindication of my consistency, as attacked in that placard. But it has been said that I was, on a former election, a member of Mr. Fleming's Committee. 'Tis true that I did see in the newspapers, to my great surprise, my name so advertised. It was an honour they paid me, but one to which I had no pretension. Gentlemen, when I first came forward and presented myself to your notice, I entered the field almost unknown as a candidate for your favour, for though I have long resided in this county, my habits of life had not rendered me much known to you. But when the great crisis of reform arrived, I offered myself to your confidence. You had then had some opportunity of judging of me by my votes given in Parliament. I had concurred in two memorable votes. The first was, the vote on the civil list, which, after the Duke of Wellington's opposition to all reform, I thought it my duty to give, and which vote brought in the late Reforming Ministry. The second was that by which, by a majority of *one*, the principle of reform was first recognised in a British House of Commons. (Cheers.) Such was your recollection of my votes in Parliament when you were pleased to invite me to carry the object of the Reform Bill into effect as your representative. Such a call was too flattering to be resisted. To that call I instantly responded, and hastened to devote myself to the services you

called upon me to perform. Such a call I have also received upon the present occasion, and I hope you will return me again with a similar majority. (Cheers.) At that time, Gentlemen, I gave no pledges, for you asked none. But not being much known to you, I felt it my duty to enter into a statement of my political views, more largely than is generally done. These statements are still on record, and do not depend on recollections which may be forgotten, nor on reports which may be disavowed, but are recorded in the various printed addresses I from time to time put forth, more particularly because I had at that time few opportunities of communicating with you personally. In these various addresses, I stated, on almost every subject, the line I intended to follow ; that my determination was to carry on safe Constitutional Reforms ; to carry the Reform Bill into effect :—upon this test I am now ready to stand or fall. If I have belied any of the professions made in those addresses—if I have not acted honestly, independently, and as far as my ability and opportunities permitted, I am content to be declared no longer worthy of being your representative. But, if I have done well, I trust you will renew the favours you have shown me, and, in case of a dissolution, send me back with the same support I had before. I have alluded briefly to my political conduct. In respect to the business of the county which has fallen to my lot, you have

not given me a great deal, but what you have given me to do, I have endeavoured to do well. I am proud to say that I possess a most honourable testimony from one of my most distinguished opponents for the part I took in carrying a Bill through Parliament. He is an opponent, but a candid and honourable one.

Gentlemen, I must apologize for so long detaining you. (No, no.) To judge of the character of the late Government, you must look at its measures. I believe, that though a great many safe and effectual reforms have been completed, a great deal still remains to be done. There are many who suppose that the reforms of the late Government were not rapid enough. I should be disposed to think so myself, if I did not know the difficulties by which they were beset. But what are we to expect from those who declare this reform which is incomplete, even in the eyes of moderate men, to be so large and revolutionary a measure as "to threaten to endanger the stability of our dearest and most ancient institutions in Church and State, and the very existence of the monarchy?" [The Hon. Bart. here referred to some Resolutions which were passed by Mr. Fleming's Committee.] What are we to expect from men whom this commencement of reform so completely alarms? If there were ever an anti-reform party, it is that party now in the possession of power and place—

To put confidence in them, as Reformers, does not appear to me possible. These gentlemen finish by telling his Majesty, "that they have the most sanguine expectations that his Majesty's new Government, whilst it maintains inviolate the institutions of the country and the blessings of the Constitution, will yet, with a ready hand and firm determination, assist in effecting such safe and salutary reforms, by the correction of all abuses and such a strict attention to economy, as shall conduce to the real happiness of the people." —I can only say, that if they do so, I will give them my cordial support; but to expect any one to place in them a previous confidence seems to me wholly out of the question. But there is a way in which you may obtain reform from any party who may be in power, that is, to return to Parliament a Reforming House of Commons.

There is one other subject to which I would allude—I mean the foreign policy of this country. I am just returned from a short excursion on the Continent: I have been in France, and I have seen the ferment of the national mind—the agitation produced by the events of the last four years. I was assured by a very great authority, not a Frenchman, but a neutral, that the preservation of the peace of Europe, and thus indirectly every internal improvement we have effected, is to be attributed to the influence, the advice, and the controlling counsel of England. I need not tell you

through what channel those measures were carried into effect. (Applause.) I believe, Gentlemen, that one of the claims of my opponents to merit is, that they are the peculiar friends of agriculture. Gentlemen, it would be strange if I did not feel the same zeal for the landed interest, being myself a landlord here, and having considerable patrimonial property in Ireland. As a proof of these feelings on my part, I must remind you that, though with great reluctance I differed from many of my friends, and my vote was perhaps not a wise one, yet so anxious did I feel to relieve the agricultural interests, that I voted for the repeal of half the malt-tax, and I did not rescind that vote a week after as many other persons did. (Laughter.) I have detained you too long. I can only say that if I have the happiness in a future Parliament of serving in the station I now hold, I will always maintain the same line of policy, and in the earnest exercise of my duty seek to merit a continuance of your confidence. (Cheers.)

S P E E C H
OF
SIR G E O R G E S T A U N T O N,
DELIVERED
AT A MEETING OF THE ELECTORS
OF SOUTH HANTS,

Which took place at Fareham, on the 9th of December, 1834.

(Corrected from the Report in the Hampshire Telegraph.)

GENTLEMEN,—In rising to address you upon the present occasion, I cannot avoid following the example of my noble colleague, in referring to the animated scene which occurred when I last enjoyed the pleasure of addressing you in this town. It is impossible to look back to that scene without feelings of proud exultation, which all the kind encouragement received elsewhere can hardly equal. The flattering manner in which you have now received me is a renewal of that kindness, and a confirmed expression of your approval, not only of my political conduct, but of that which I have observed as a private individual.—The one holds out to me a flattering hope of triumph in our arduous contest, the other will give happiness and comfort to every future moment of my life. We both, in concluding our last address, had to thank

you for the kindness we then received, and concluded with hoping the testimony of your approbation at that period would be confirmed when we next appeared to give an account of our stewardship, and to ask for a renewal of your confidence. (Cheers.) This hope of your confidence is to-day fully realized. I feel it, however, necessary, as my noble colleague has done, to notice those points which, in our respective situations, may seem to require explanation. My noble colleague's claims to your approbation are identified with the Reform Government, of which he was such a valuable and efficient member, and such a distinguished ornament. (Hear, hear.) My claims to your approbation are of an equally essential, though of a humbler kind—whether I have been an independent and efficient Member of Parliament, and whether, as a country gentleman, I have honestly and faithfully performed my duty to my constituents. We stood in different, essentially different, positions in these respects; but there was one most essential point in which we were united, and that was *this*—we were both desirous of carrying the great principles of the Reform Bill into effect, for the preservation and improvement of the great institutions of this country. (Applause.) With this view and in this character, we were originally invited by you, Gentlemen, to present ourselves as candidates for the honour of representing you. *My* claims to your future confidence

depend how far I have fulfilled the trust then reposed in me. You had some test of my zeal in this cause in my previous conduct in Parliament. You had, Gentlemen, as a test of my sentiments as to reform, two memorable votes in which I felt it my duty to concur. The *first* brought in a reforming Ministry; the *second*, first established the great principle of reform by a vote of the House of Commons. But these votes would have been a dead letter, if we had not endeavoured to carry forward that principle which the Reform Bill was intended to work out. By enlarging the constituency of this country, that Bill placed it in the power of the people to answer this object in the face of any future Ministry, however adverse.

It is not my intention, as a principal, to go over the ground occupied by my noble colleague with so much eloquence. But I may give my testimony as a *witness* to the success of that peculiar branch of the policy adopted by the Administration, to which my noble colleague belonged. I am lately returned from the Continent, and I have seen something of the ferment of men's minds, and of what has been the state of Europe during the four years the late Administration was in power. I have had some opportunity of witnessing those elements of mischief which, under a different system of policy, might have broken out again, and perhaps have produced a renewal of the horror and

desolation of the former revolution in France. I have seen, in one part, Carlists, who would have shackled every free institution in Europe with the bonds of the Holy Alliance. I have seen, on the other hand, Republicans, who would have claimed the Rhine as a boundary, and involved all Europe in another revolutionary war. Amid all these conflicting passions, peace has been preserved; and this, as I have the strongest reason to believe, has been mainly effected through the advice and controlling influence of the Government of this country. This testimony I feel bound to give, because it was in the department of my noble colleague; and if he is not already sufficiently entitled to your confidence as a member of the general Administration, he might rest his claims for your favour on that of his own department alone. (Cheers.)

There are two subjects upon which I must address you at some little length, because they have been made use of in a particular manner by my opponents, as an objection to the renewal of your confidence. They are, the established religion of the country, and the agricultural interests. To both of these I feel and have ever shown the strongest attachment. (Hear, and applause.) With regard to the Established Religion of the country, I have ever cherished a sincere and ardent attachment to the pure form of Christianity happily established by law in this country, and so inti-

mately interwoven with its moral and temporal prosperity. I am certainly of opinion, with regard to the property which the piety and wisdom of our ancestors has appropriated to this Church, that it will admit of a more equitable distribution. I think so, because, if one man has too much, other men must have too little. If there are pluralities—if some clergymen have two livings, other clergymen must want livings. But I do at the same time most decidedly oppose any attempt to alienate to a secular purpose one farthing of what our ancestors have thus wisely and piously appropriated. It is a sacred trust which we have received, and which we *cannot*—we *dare not*—violate. I think a great mistake is made with regard to the admission of the Dissenters into the Universities. The question is not whether they shall be admitted—they are admitted already at Cambridge—the point is, in this respect, only as to placing Oxford in the same position. Now, what was always safe at Cambridge cannot be very injurious at Oxford. The question is not so much whether they shall be admitted to, but in what character they shall leave the University; whether they shall receive, as the fruit of their labours, that test of their success which a degree confers? I leave it to any impartial men whether the interests of the Church require that lawyers should study two years longer, because they are Dissenters; or that medical men should practise

on the same account as licentiates only, instead of being regular members of the College of Physicians. I must here allude, for a moment only, to the report of the meeting at Portsea. I am much flattered by the very perfect manner in which what I said is presented to the public ; but I was mistaken as to one word, and am supposed to include theological degrees, when speaking of those to which Dissenters ought to be admitted. It is quite clear that *theological* degrees must be confined to the Church of England. Dissenters have equal access to them through the Universities of Scotland. I believe, as to the question of church-rates, the measure I supported was a fair and satisfactory compromise. If any better can be suggested, I shall be very happy to support it. It is now said, that the parties about to be in office are distinguished by their *peculiar* attachment to the Church, and therefore you are called upon to vote for our opponents. Gentlemen, I beseech you to remember their past conduct in this very respect. They refused you, indeed, civil reform ; but on a question of the utmost importance, in which the interests of the Church were involved, they did not hesitate to turn round and sacrifice them upon the altar of expediency. I was certainly one of those who always approved of Catholic Emancipation, but I could not approve of the manner in which it was precipitately carried by its former opponents. I cannot understand how

those churchmen who would not then trust the right honourable baronet now expected from Italy, with the interests of the Church, even as Member for the University of Oxford, are now so ready to hail his return to power, as Prime Minister of the empire at large. I shall always honour him for having passed the great measure of Catholic Emancipation, but I cannot the less reprobate the inconsistency of those who give him now a credit for attachment to the Established Church which they deny to myself.

I shall only just allude, in passing, to the question of tithes. I am convinced that, if commuted by some fair and equitable arrangement, we should not only benefit the landed interests, but confer a great and important service on the Church itself. (Cheers.) There would, no doubt, be some difficulty in reconciling that with the rights of property, but I would give my best attention to such a law when it might come before Parliament.

I pass, Gentlemen, to the agricultural interests. My personal interests in this county and in Ireland, though I do not boast of great property in either, are in unison with agriculture; and it is pretty well known to my tenants, that if the farmer has suffered by the depressed state of the agricultural interest, I am willing to share his sufferings with him, in the reduction of my rents. (Cheers.) What I feel for myself and for them, I

must feel for the country at large. I feel that no interest can flourish, if the staple interest of the empire remains under depression. So strongly did I feel this, that I ventured, in opposition to many of my friends, and with some risk as to the propriety of my vote, in the financial circumstances of the country, to join in the vote for taking off half the malt-tax, and persisted in that vote in the following week, notwithstanding every inducement to rescind it. All the assessed taxes pressing upon agriculture have been reduced. There was every disposition in the late Government to keep the agricultural interests in view, and, as far as they went, they had my very cordial support. (Cheers.)

There is one other point to which I reluctantly allude, because it took place previous to the last election. But still the assertion that I was recorded on Mr. Fleming's committee has been brought forward again, and I must answer it. I certainly *did* see it. My name *was* so published. And some friends called on me at the time to give it a public contradiction; but I refused. I had determined to take no part in that election; and I thought that, by so coming forward, I should be doing an essential injury to the party whose act I disclaimed. It is now sufficient to repeat that I did not authorize my name to be placed there. I never joined the committee, or acted in it in any way whatever. Gentlemen, at the last election, my colleague and I were united upon one

essential point—that of carrying the Reform Bill into effect. There is now another point of union which we derive from our opponents... We had then but one opponent, now we have two. Their address is signed *Fleming and Compton*. It is rather too much to raise a cry of coalition, when we also sign *Palmerston and Staunton*. In this joint address we stated the opinions we entertained. The noble lord has not relinquished by it the party of which he is a distinguished member, any more than I have adopted it. If I have supported *Whig* measures, it was because *they* were for reform; and if I have opposed *Tory* measures, it has been because *they* were against reform; and not, in either case, on party grounds. These principles have and always will govern my conduct. I had this day the good fortune to meet some remarks of our opponents respecting this very address. It was interlined. It said—*all this may be very true; these men may wish to confine themselves to constitutional reforms, but they will be hurried on by their friends into revolution and anarchy.* Now, Gentlemen, I may appeal to you who support us, whether you have any intention of that nature. Indeed, if I were not convinced that you were attached to our glorious constitution of King, Lords, and Commons, as much as ourselves, I can answer for it you would not find me asking for your votes on this occasion. Gentlemen, be assured that the King desires to govern according to the wishes of

his people ;—witness his conduct in the passing of the Reform Bill. If because we slumbered, when we thought the triumph was secure ; if, therefore, it has been represented to His Majesty that there was a re-action in the country, it is for the people of this country to prove the contrary. (Cheers.) When you have done *this*, your gracious Sovereign will do as he did in the Reform Bill ; he will place his confidence in those Ministers who will maintain its principles. I can only say that I will, to the best of my ability, assist to carry into effect the principles of sound constitutional reform ; and I trust that however imperfect, my honest intentions will secure me a renewal of your confidence. (Cheers.)

S P E E C H
O F
S I R G E O R G E S T A U N T O N ,
D E L I V E R E D
A T A M E E T I N G O F T H E E L E C T O R S
O F S O U T H H A N T S ,

Which took place at Southampton, on the 11th of December, 1834.

(Corrected from the Report in the Morning Chronicle.)

GENTLEMEN,—The highly flattering reception that you have been pleased to give to my noble colleague and myself this day, and the important resolution in our favour that you have just carried with such unanimous approbation, I receive not merely as the expression (certainly the most gratifying expression) of your approval of our individual conduct during the two arduous Sessions in which we have endeavoured to serve you in Parliament, but I receive it as the most gratifying assurance of your firm and steady adherence to those great principles, and to that great and good cause, for the support of which you originally sent us to Parliament. (Cheers.) No dissolution of Parliament has certainly yet taken place; but we have, unfortunately, too good evidence of our gracious Monarch

having been deluded (I might say), but at least having been misled, into an opinion that a reaction has taken place in the country, and that it is no longer influenced by those sentiments in favour of reform which you expressed in so decided, and, I may say, in so glorious a manner in the last two elections of 1831 and 1832. It is the determination we see of the present Government to bring this question to an immediate test by a dissolution; and I rejoice that it is so, since the Reform Bill has given a free expression of opinion to more than 800,000 enlightened and independent electors of this empire. (Applause.) As that expression of opinion can no longer be neutralized by the power of nomination or the influence of patronage, I feel confident of the result. (Cheers.) I, for one, therefore, am ready to come forward to assist you in carrying your intentions and feelings into effect on this occasion, upon the same principles and under the same auspices as I did when you first did me the honour of electing me as one of your representatives. I accepted your requisition at that time—a requisition too numerously signed, and too flatteringly expressed for me to decline; and I came forward to claim your suffrages as an independent country gentleman, attached to no party, having no personal objects to gratify, having certainly one object, and one object only of ambition—that of becoming the representative of a

free and enlightened body of the constituency of this county. (Applause.) I came forward for your acceptance as a sincere friend of reform on safe constitutional principles. As such you accepted my services; as such you have now an opportunity of judging how far the professions I then made have been realized during the time I have served you.

I will not detain you by attempting to go over those various measures introduced by the late Government to which I have had the pleasure of giving my support—not my indiscriminate and unqualified support, but my general support, because the Government which I supported was a Government pledged to carry the principle of reform into full effect. Neither will I detain you by going over the merits of the late Administration, which have been illustrated with so much eloquence by my noble colleague. I will only advert to one point, and that is the great object which is so interesting to the religious and moral feelings of this country as well as to every lover of humanity and justice in the world an object which many great and good men in vain attempted to effect, but which the late Administration happily succeeded in carrying—I allude to the extinction of slavery. (Cheers.) I would turn your attention to the fact, that whilst this great and good object has been accomplished, and with a pecuniary sacrifice unparalleled in the history of

nations, at the same time five millions of annual taxes have been reduced. (Cheers.)

Instead, therefore, of going over the ground already so sufficiently treated of by my noble friend and colleague, I will address myself shortly to the different classes of electors whom I have here the honour of meeting—men entertaining, perhaps, different shades of opinion, yet all, upon one ground or another, interested in the important crisis at which we are now arrived. I certainly have not much to say to the honest and sincere reformer. I think it would be needless for me to enter into any argument to show to him how important it is, that upon this occasion we should lay aside all differences of opinion as to whether more or less of reform should be accomplished, and that all should assist in preventing anti-reform principles from regaining possession of the destinies of this country. Among that class of reformers to whom I have just alluded, I certainly do not include those pretended reformers who, while they have reform upon their lips, have shown that they are inveterate enemies to reform in their hearts. (Applause.) For my own part, I confess that I cannot place confidence in such a sudden conversion as that which is now professed by those who support the Ministers recently called to His Majesty's councils.

I also think it is unnecessary for me to appeal

to that highly respectable and valuable class of the community, consisting of those who dissent from the established religion of the country; who, although they agree with us very nearly in doctrine, dissent—conscientiously dissent—from our ecclesiastical discipline. I need not say much to convince them how unwise it would be to adhere to the opponents of civil and religious liberty. (Applause.)

There is another party who I fear are not so friendly to us, and yet I know not what reason they can have to object to the policy we have pursued. I think, indeed, I can show some reason why they should be attached instead of opposed to us—I mean those who are called the High Church party, and who consider themselves almost the exclusive champions of the Protestant religion. Equally attached as we are to the religion of our forefathers, equally convinced that its maintenance is essential as well to the temporal as to the religious prosperity of the country, I, for one, certainly cannot conceive how we can add to its strength by narrowing its basis. (Cheers.) We have declared our views to be these—to diminish pluralities, to equalize the distribution of the property of the Church, and thus to render the establishment stronger and more efficient, whilst we fixed it more firmly in the affections of the country. (Cheers.) We never have proposed to apply the property of the Church to any other than

sacred purposes; but we certainly are most anxious that it should be applied in a more efficient and satisfactory manner. (Cheers.)

That class of electors whom I am most particularly anxious to address is composed of those who partake but little of political excitement; but who are anxious to see the country happy and prosperous, and to secure the blessings of peace abroad and tranquillity at home. I would beg of that class of electors to compare the present state of the country at the moment the Reforming Administration is rendering up the reins of government, with what it was when they took office in 1830. When they recollect the difficulties which his Majesty's late Ministers had to encounter—when they look at the many improvements which they effected in the institutions and government of the country,—when, in spite of the revolutions and changes which were occurring abroad, they see the peace and tranquillity which has been maintained at home—when they see and remember all this—I ask them whether they consider it safer or wiser to support the friends of the system by which these objects were attained, or to transfer their support to the friends and adherents of those who, in the year 1830, were found to be incapable of wielding the destinies of the empire? (Cheers.) I will only add, that if, as I am confident you do, you adhere to those principles which originally induced

you to call my noble colleague and myself to that proud situation which we have occupied for the last two years, you may depend upon my best exertions, humble as they are, but honestly and independently given, in carrying them into effect in the next Parliament. (Cheers.)



S P E E C H
O F
S I R G E O R G E S T A U N T O N ,
D E L I V E R E D O N
T H E H U S T I N G S A T S O U T H A M P T O N ,
O N T H E 13th J A N U A R Y , 1835 ,
T H E D A Y O F N O M I N A T I O N O F T H E C A N D I D A T E S .

(Corrected from the Report in the Portsmouth Herald.)

GENTLEMEN,—I do not think it necessary at this advanced period of the day to detain you a very great length of time. I come forward *now*, Gentlemen, to ask for your suffrages, and for the renewal of your confidence, precisely on the same grounds and principles upon which I came forward two years ago. I came forward *then*, as an independent country gentleman, who had resided among you upon his estate for fourteen years. I came forward with no personal object to gratify, after having served my country to the best of my ability abroad, but without having ever held office, or wishing to hold office, at home. I am sincerely attached to the principles of sound constitutional reform; and I will exert myself, if replaced in the condition of your representa-

tive, honestly and independently in Parliament, in carrying those principles fairly and fully into effect. As far as my claims to your favour, or the vindication of my conduct, depend upon the vindication of His Majesty's late Government, I shall be content to leave the question in the hands of my noble friend, who has entered so fully into the defence of the conduct of that Administration. But, in point of fact, my claims to your favour do not rest entirely or even mainly on that basis. I considered it my duty to give my free independent support to that Government, because it was a reforming Government, devoted to carrying reform into effect. But it was my lot upon no less than eight important occasions, during the last two sessions, to differ from them. I considered it a misfortune, because I regretted to oppose a Government whose continuance in power I conceived advantageous to the interests of the country. But having had the misfortune to differ, I considered it my duty, as an independent man, to support my opinion by my vote. I state this now, not in order to vindicate those votes, though I am ready to do so; but in answer to those who doubt my independence. (Cheers.) I gave a general and free support to the late Government, as I stated before, because they were really a reforming Government, and not merely professed to be so; not merely because they had carried some good measures,

such as the restoration of the currency and the improvement of the criminal law. I supported the late Government, because they were pledged to three great objects,—reform, retrenchment, and peace.—(Hear, hear.) Because, amidst great difficulties, they did, to their utmost, fulfil those pledges. They not only carried the Reform Bill, but they entertained various important measures connected with our great interests; and other measures of that character, we have reason to believe, were ready to be brought before Parliament. With respect to retrenchment, though so much had been done before, they found themselves enabled to take off five millions of taxes. With regard to peace, I may speak from personal knowledge. Every man who has been on the Continent and seen the elements of discord there at work must admire the success of the line of policy pursued. Continental contests, we know, cannot exist without drawing in this country; and in war, in addition to the misery it involves, all the improvements of peace are lost. (Hear, hear.) For these reasons I felt it my duty to support the late Government. We have never been told what was the ground for which they were dismissed. We are told indeed, generally, of some designs dangerous to the Monarchy, the Constitution, and the Religion, of this country. I can only say for myself that I was not in the secrets of the late Government; but those designs were never di-

vulged to Parliament. If they had been, no one would have been more opposed to them than myself. On no point am I more strongly attached than to the religion of our fathers as happily established by law. I might appeal to the fact, that, during my absence in France, I had the honour of being appointed president of an institution to uphold the Church, in which some of my honourable opponents are enrolled as vice-presidents. I consider the maintenance of a connexion between the Church and State as essential to the preservation of both. I would secure the property of the Church to the sacred purpose for which it was destined by our ancestors. But I do not consider the preservation of the Church at all inconsistent with the great and glorious principle of religious liberty. It is my object, therefore, to admit the just claims of the Dissenters. I am told that my attachment to the Church is doubted because I supported two measures. The first is, my support to Lord Althorp's motion for the extinction of church-rates. That was, indeed, a very dangerous measure ; but, unfortunately for my opponents, it was supported by the Right Honourable Sir R. Peel ! But there was another motion : I voted, on the second reading, for the admission of Dissenters into the Universities. This measure, if carried, would have put the University of Oxford upon the same footing as that of Cambridge. The

danger of that measure to the Church could not have been, surely, very great, when it found in the House of Commons only forty-four persons to oppose it! I cannot assert that it received the support of Sir Robert Peel, but it did that of another individual, who, I am sure, every man here will join in admitting to be a high authority, and one of the ablest men in the House of Commons, now standing aloof from both parties—I mean Lord Stanley. I think, in joining him, there could be no great danger to the religion of the country. I can, lastly, appeal to the authority of the clergy of my own neighbourhood. There are there ten resident clergymen, who are not generally friends of the late Administration, and yet seven of these gentlemen have already promised me their votes.

There is another subject in which we are deeply interested,—namely, agriculture. It has been held out that the present Government and their supporters are great friends to agriculture, and the farmers of this country have been led to believe that they will derive some great benefit from them. But I should be glad to ask, if they can find a single paragraph in the address of the prime minister to the electors of Tamworth in favour of agriculture? Have the present Government obtained the support of that Noble Marquis who is known as the special friend of agriculture? Is it not generally reported, on the contrary, that

he has declined supporting the present Government because he cannot obtain for agriculture any promise of relief? I think myself entitled to claim the benefit of my own votes upon this subject. When Sir W. Ingleby brought forward his motion for the repeal of half the malt-tax, I gave him my support. I felt the difficulty of our financial circumstances; but so anxious was I for the relief of agriculture, that I was willing to run some risk to accomplish so desirable a measure. How comes it then that agriculture does not now enjoy that boon? The vote was rescinded the next week; and I think you will find that a considerable portion of the friends of those now in office assisted the late Government in rescinding that vote. I am not coming now, Gentlemen, to make new professions; I simply appeal to my conduct during the two sessions I have served you in Parliament. By that test I desire to stand or fall. (Hear, hear.)

I will just allude here to the private business I have done for the county. It has not been a great deal, but what you have given me to do, I have endeavoured to do well, without reference to the party, whether friend or opponent; and I have the testimony of one of my leading opponents to that effect. In the course of this duty, I have had a great deal of communication with the Admiralty and the Treasury in order to obtain the hearing of the claims, or the redress of the

grievances of my constituents. I challenge any man to say that I ever asked the shadow of a favour from the Government for myself or any person connected with me, on any of these occasions.

There is one point on which I certainly think you have a right to know explicitly my opinion; that is, as to His Majesty's present Government. I have openly and honestly declared from the beginning that I do not place confidence in their principles as to reform. It is impossible, I do say, to give confidence in that respect to those who have all along opposed it. I do not mean to accuse them of insincerity, but *their* notions of reform are not, as I fear, *our* notions; they are not the reforms *we* desire—not what the country desires, nor what I am determined, as far as depends on me, it shall have, if I come into Parliament. I will state my opinion in the words of that eminent statesman who now stands aloof from both parties. Lord Stanley says, "he has no public grounds for confidence, that they will boldly and strenuously act upon those principles of reform which he believes to be essential to the national welfare;" but I also say with Lord Stanley, "should they give free scope to liberal principles, I will lend them my humble aid towards carrying them into effect." (Hear, hear.) To me *personally* it is of no importance whether Lord Melbourne or Sir Robert

Peel be the head of the Government, but I cannot give *confidence* until I find it supported by *conduct*. In the course of the long and arduous canvass which I have gone through, I have had this gratification—it has brought me much better acquainted than I was before with those I *have been* proud to call, and trust I *shall have* the pleasure *again* of calling, my constituents. I have heard a great deal about intimidation; I have heard of tenants being threatened by landlords, and shopkeepers by their customers; but I am willing to hope that all these charges may yet be shown to be unfounded: I am willing to hope, for the honour of the aristocracy and gentry of this country, that they have not been guilty of that which would render the representation a mockery and the Government a despotism—it might be an honest despotism, but still one which every friend of his country would deprecate. We are also told of the influence of Government. I honestly say I am in no fear of that influence, because the most selfish calculator would hardly bow to a Government that may be said to be here to-day and gone to-morrow; the thread of whose existence may snap within a week of the meeting of Parliament. I do not mean by this to express any wishes or intentions of my own with respect to this point, but solely to the inferences that all men must draw from the progress of the present elections. I have only to add, Gentlemen, that, for my part, if you return me to

Parliament, I will do my best to obtain all the reforms that are due to the people—either *by* the present Government, or, if that is not possible, by using my best exertions to dissolve it. I thank you for the attention you have given me; I assure you I will pursue the same line of conduct in promoting your interest, whatever the Government may be, if you please to replace me in the proud situation I have held the last two years. (Cheers.)

APPENDIX.

*Extracts from SIR GEORGE STAUNTON's Addresses,
inserted in the County Papers, in 1832, and re-
ferred to (p. 5.) in his Speech at Portsea.*

1.

THE principles upon which I offer myself to your notice are those of perfect independence; they are those upon which I have acted ever since I have had the honour of a seat in Parliament. I have never allied myself to any Ministry, though I have always been ready to support the King's Government as long as I have found them acting up to their professions, and honestly endeavouring to carry measures for the public good. I have no party objects to promote, or private interests to gratify: I have never obtained, or desired to obtain, either for myself or my friends, one farthing of the public money, through the medium of my parliamentary influence.

It will be recollect that I withdrew my support from the late Administration on the memorable division upon the Civil List, the result of which division was to bring his Majesty's present Ministers into office. I did so because I disapproved of some of their principles, and of none more than their uncompromising opposition to all Parliamentary Reform.

I subsequently supported the second reading of the first Bill of Reform, introduced by the present Ministry, for

the sake of the general principle, notwithstanding my objection to some of its provisions. In the same spirit now that the Bill is LAW, I am not less anxious and determined than its most unqualified supporters, to carry all its principles fully and fairly into effect.

The state of the Church, the Corn Laws, Colonial Slavery, and the Charters of the Bank and the East India Company, are all subjects which will claim the early notice of the Reformed Parliament. To each of these I shall give my most earnest and deliberate consideration, and decide to the best of my ability, according to my sincere belief of what is most conducive to the public good, under the new and peculiar circumstances in which the nation is placed.

No man is more sensible than I am of the importance of the strictest attention to economy in all the branches of the public expenditure, the abolition of useless places and sinecures, and the utmost reduction of taxation which is consistent with the preservation inviolate of the public faith, and the maintenance in all their activity and integrity of those great national establishments, which are at once our glory and our security.

My limits will not allow me to say more on the subject of our Foreign Policy, than that I think it ought to be essentially PACIFIC: but it must be obvious to every one that no country can be secure in the enjoyment of PEACE, which is not also prepared to defend its rights and interests by WAR.

I have thus but slightly touched on some of the great questions which remain to be fully investigated and discussed hereafter; because I feel convinced that you do not wish me to prejudge at this moment the details of questions of so much difficulty and complexity, and that you are willing to place in your Representatives,

